

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----040951Z 064787 /15

P R 040733Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 65
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 0045

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, JO, XF
SUBJECT: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER -- AREA SITUATION

SUMMARY. IN WIDE RANGING DISCUSSION ABOUT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN AREA, PRIME MINISTER BADRAN TOLD ME THAT PRESENT TALKS IN WHICH HE IS ENGAGED RE JORDAN-SYRIA UNITY ARE EXPLORATORY AND LIKELY TO STAY THAT WAY FOR SOME TIME. WHATEVER THE NATURE OF ANY FUTURE INSTITUTIONAL UNION WITH SYRIA, JORDAN INTENDS TO MAINTAIN ITS OWN REGIME AND INTERNAL CONTROL. TIES WILL BE MOSTLY ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL. JORDAN IS SETTING TONE AND PACE OF PROCESS TOWARD UNITY WITH WILLING CONCURRENCE OF SYRIANS WHO SEEM DIVIDED ABOUT THEIR OBJECTIVES IN CLOSER RELATIONS.

BADRAN IS SOMEWHAT DISTRUSTFUL OF SADAT'S REAL OBJECTIVES IN RECENT PROMOTION OF FORMAL LINKS BETWEEN JORDAN AND A FUTURE PALESTINIAN STATE. GOJ, HOWEVER, OBVIOUSLY PLEASED AT ROLE WHICH SADAT SUGGESTS FOR JORDAN. BADRAN IS UNCERTAIN ABOUT OBJECTIVES OF EGYPT-SYRIA JOINT POLITICAL COMMAND. BADRAN ACCEPTS NEED FOR JORDAN TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH EGYPT.

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GOJ BEING PRESSED BY SOME OTHER ARAB STATES -- SYRIA, KUWAIT AND QATAR -- AND SOME PLO LEADERS TO REOPEN DIALOGUE WITH PLO. BADRAN IS NOT OPPOSED, BUT BELIEVES IT SHOULD PROCEED SLOWLY. THILE PLO OFFICIALS WILL CONTINUE TO COME TO AMMAN FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, PLO IS NOT LIKELY TO BE ALLOWED

TO ENGAGE AGAIN IN POLITICAL ACTION AMONG PALESTINIANS
HERE. GOJ CONTINUING LAVISH RECEPTION OF ITS
WEST BANK POLITICAL ALLY SHEIK JA-ABARI DESIGNED TO
INCREASE PLO FRUSTRATION AND INTEREST IN DISCUSSIONS
WITH JORDAN. END SUMMARY.

1. I SAW PRIME MINISTER BADRAN ON JANUARY 3, MY
FIRST DISCUSSION WITH HIM SINCE LATE NOVEMBER.
TALK TURNED AROUND RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS
IN THE AREA ON WHICH BADRAN WAS QUITE FORTHCOMING.
HE WAS INTERESTED IN MY RECENT TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA
AND YEMEN AND I DESCRIBED FOR HIM BRIEFLY CONDITIONS
IN BOTH OF THOSE COUNTRIES AS I HAD FOUND THEM.

2. I ASKED HIM ABOUT JORDANIAN-SYRIAN RELATIONS
SINCE HE IS JORDAN'S PRINCIPAL REPRESENTATIVE ON THE
JOINT COMMITTEE FORMED TO PURSUE THE SUBJECT OF CLOSER
RELATIONS. BADRAN BEGAN BY NOTING THAT THE PRESENT
TALKS ARE VERY EXPLORATORY. NO CONCRETE DECISIONS
HAVE BEEN MADE AND IT IS LIKELY TALKS WILL CONTINUE
FOR SOME TIME. SECOND CAVEAT WHICH HE ADDED WAS
THAT JORDAN IS DETERMINED TO CONTINUE THE LIFE OF
THE PRESENT REGIME IN THE CONTEXT OF WHATEVER
ARRIVES FROM CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS. INTERNAL
GOVERNMENT AND SECURITY QUESTIONS ARE THEREFORE
ISSUES ON WHICH THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE. HE
DID NAME FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, ECONOMIC PLANNING,
CLOSER INTEGRATION OF TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER
UTILITY ARRANGEMENTS, TARIFFS AND SO FORTH AS
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QUESTIONS ON WHICH FURTHER JOINT UNDERSTANDINGS
MIGHT BE REACHED. HE SAID AS OF THIS POINT
JORDAN HAD MADE MOST OF THE PRESENTATIONS AND WAS
CONTINUING TO TAKE THE LEAD IN DISCUSSIONS.

3. I ASKED ABOUT THE SYRIAN APPROACH. HE SAID THAT THE
SYRIANS APPEAR TO HAVE NO FIXED IDEAS AND HAVE
PRETTY MUCH SUGGESTED TO THE JORDANIANS THAT JORDAN
SHOULD SET THE TONE AND PACE OF WHATEVER IS DESIRED.
MORE CANDIDLY, BADRAN SAID THAT THE SYRIANS APPEAR
TO HAVE DIFFERENCES AMONG THEMSELVES ABOUT WHAT
THEY REALLY WANT. THE COMMITTEE ON THE SYRIAN
SIDE IS COMPOSED OF PRIME MINISTER KHULEIFAWI
KHADDAM, EX-PRIME MINISTER AYYUBI AND AIR FORCE
CHIEF NAJI JAMIL. BADRAN EXPECTS DISCUSSIONS
TO RESUME SHORTLY (WITHIN NEXT SEVERAL DAYS). HE HOPES
TO INVITE SYRIANS TO COME TO AMMAN, BUT THIS DEPENDS UPON
KHADDAM'S HEALTH. INCIDENTALLY, LATTER SEEMS TO BE
RECOVERING WELL FROM BULLET WOUNDS, ACCORDING TO

BADRAN, BUT SERIOUS REACTION TO ANTIBIOTICS HAS
KEPT HIM FROM BEING TOO ACTIVE.

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 66
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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4. I TURNED NEXT IN DISCUSSION TO SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN
RELATIONS. BADRAN SAID HE ACCEPTED SYRIAN STATEMENT
THAT THE JOINT POLITICAL COMMAND IDEA WAS COMPLETELY
AND EGYPTIAN ONE. HE ALSO SAID HE WAS PLEASED BY SADAT'S
RECENT STATEMENTS WHICH APPEARED TO THE PRESS TO APPROVE
CLOSER SYRIAN-JORDANIAN RELATIONS AND WHICH INTRODUCED
AGAIN THE NOTION THAT THERE SHOULD BE SOME CONFEDERAL
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JORDAN AND ANY FUTURE
PALESTINIAN STATE. BADRAN SAID THAT HE IS SOMEWHAT
DISTRUSTFUL OF WHAT SADAT'S REAL OBJECTIVES ARE,
RECALLING THAT IN THE PAST SADAT HAD ADVOCATED TIES
BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE PALESTINIANS ONLY TO HAVE
THEM DISAPPEAR RAPIDLY AT THE RABAT SUMMIT. FURTHER,
HE SAID JORDAN KNOWS VERY LITTLE ABOUT WHAT EGYPT
AND SYRIA REALLY WISH TO ACHIEVE BY THE JOINT
COMMAND AND WILL WANT TO SIT BY QUIETLY AND SEE
ALSO WHAT DEVELOPS THERE. UP TO THIS POINT, HE SAID, THE
STEPS ALL SEEM TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE AND BUILT AROUND
THE NEED FOR CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN ALL THREE
STATES. HE DID NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT
SADAT WOULD SOON COME TO SYRIA TO DISCUSS MATTERS
FURTHER WITH ASAD. HE ALSO SEEMED TO ACCEPT THE
NEED FOR JORDAN TO DEVELOP FURTHER ITS RELATIONS

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WITH EGYPT, BUT ENVISAGED NO TIMETABLE OR CONCRETE STEPF FOR THIS.

5. BADRAN HIMSELF BROUGHT UP THE QUESTION OF THE PLO'S CURRENT PURSUIT OF CLOSER RELATIONS WITH JORDAN. HE MENTIONED THE FACT THAT THE PLO'S ABU MAIZER HAD BEEN IN AMMAN FOR AN ARAB CULTURAL MINISTERS CONFERENCE. HE HAD RAISED THE QUESTION OF TALKS WITH THE JORDANIANS. BADRAN HAD PUT HIM OFF BY SAYING THAT JORDANIAN SECURITY AUTHORITIES WISHED TO DISCUSS SOME OF HIS PAST ACTIVITIES WITH ABU MAIZER AND HIS IMMUNITY IN REGARD TO THESE DISCUSSIONS COULD ONLY BE EXTENDED THROUGH THE PERIOD OF THE ACTUAL CULTURAL CONFERENCE AND NOT FOR AN EXTENDED STAY TO DISCUSS OTHER ISSUES WITH JORDAN.

6. BADRAN ALSO NOTED THAT SYRIA, KUWAIT AND QATAR HAD TAKEN THE LEAD IN URGING THE JORDANIANS TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PLO. THIS WAS AGAINST THE BACK DROP OF RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS, BADRAN NOTED, BY QADDUMI AND KHALID EL HASSAN OF THE PLO IN KUWAIT AND QATAR AFFIRMING THE PLO'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE IDEA OF A WEST BANK STATE.

7. BADRAN SAID THAT JORDAN IS NOT OPPOSED IN PRINCIPLE TO THE IDEA OF SUCH DISCUSSIONS. HOWEVER, TACTICALLY THE JORDANIANS BELIEVE THEIR INTERESTS ARE BEST SERVED BY GOING AT THE PROBLEM VERY SLOWLY. THUS, BADRAN SEES NOTHING MOVING AHEAD VERY RAPIDLY, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOTE THAT THE PLO WOULD POSSIBLY RE REPRESENTED IN AMMAN AT AN ARAB PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR MID-JANUARY. BADRAN SAYS HE ASSUMES THE PLO OBJECTIVE IS TO REOPEN OFFICES IN JORDAN AND ALSO TO GAIN A FREE HAND IN CONDUCTING POLITICAL WORK AMONG PALESTINIANS HERE. HE SAID HE AND KING ARE FULLY SECRET

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ALERT TO THE DANGERS OF SUCH A STEP AND WILL NOT PERMIT SUCH TO TAKE PLACE. BADRAN ALSO SEES PLO INTEREST IN DISCUSSIONS WITH JORDAN HEIGHTENED BY VISITS SUCH AS THAT CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE HERE BY HEBRON (WEST BANK) NOTABLE SHEIKH JA-ABARI. IN FACT BADRAN WENT SO FAR AS TO ADMIT THAT JORDANIANS WERE HANDLING THE JA-ABARI VISIT IN A MANNER DESIGNED TO INCREASE PLO UNEASE AND PRESUMED INTEREST IN DISCUSSIONS WITH JORDAN.

8. COMMENT. JORDANIANS, WHILE MYSTIFIED IN PART ABOUT SADAT'S ACTUAL OBJECTIVES IN THE PATCH-UP WITH ASAD, ARE NOT ALL THAT DISPLEASED BY DEVELOPMENTS. THEY WERE PARTICULARLY PLEASED, WHATEVER SADAT'S EVENTUAL OBJECTIVES MIGHT BE, BY RECENT STATEMENTS ON THE SHAPE OF THE JORDANIAN ROLE IN THE PEACE AND ABOUT JORDANIAN-SYRIAN RELATIONS. IT IS ALSO NOT IMPROBABLE THAT WE WILL SEE IN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE THE OPENING OF SOME DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN JORDANIANS AND PLO WHICH PLO HAS BEEN PUSHING FOR FOR SOME MONTHS. WHERE THEY LEAD IS MUCH HARDER TO PREDICT, ALTHOUGH IT IS MOST UNLIKELY THAT JORDANIANS WOULD BE PREPARED TO ALLOW ANYTHING AT THE OUTSIDE BUT SOME PURELY COSMETIC IMPROVEMENTS IN PLO PRESENCE IN AMMAN.
PICKERING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC COOPERATION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977AMMAN00045
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770002-1092
Format: TEL
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770184/aaaacuva.tel
Line Count: 241
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3670489
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER -- AREA SITUATION SUMMARY. IN WIDE RANGING DISCUSSION ABOUT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN AREA. PRIME MINISTER BADRAN TOLD M
TAGS: PFOR, JO, XF, US, (PICKERING, THOMAS R), (BADRAN, MUDHAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e6d3e4dd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009